News from the Wyoming Department of Health

Friday, August 18, 2006

Goshen County Man Diagnosed with West Nile Virus Fever

CHEYENNE – A Goshen County man is the third Wyoming resident found to be infected with West Nile virus this year, according to the Wyoming Department of Health.

The man first experienced symptoms in early August, including fever, chills, skin sensitivity and muscle aches and has been diagnosed with West Nile fever after lab testing confirmation.

"With the number of human cases growing in the states surrounding Wyoming, it's important that our state's residents take steps to protect themselves from mosquito bites," said Dr. Tracy Murphy, state epidemiologist for the Wyoming Department of Health.

As of August 15, the Centers for Disease Control reports 112 cases in Idaho, 13 cases in Utah, 23 cases in Colorado, 8 cases in Nebraska, 27 cases in South Dakota and 2 in Montana.

Three horses and one alpaca have tested positive for the disease in Wyoming for 2006 as of August 18. The WNV-positive horses were from Campbell, Fremont and Park counties. The alpaca was from Campbell.

West Nile virus (WNV) is a mosquito-borne disease that can cause a potentially serious illness in humans. Mosquitoes spread the virus after they feed on infected birds and then bite people, other birds and animals.

Most people infected with WNV do not develop symptoms. Of those people who do develop clinical illness, most develop mild symptoms such as fever, headache, body aches, skin rash and swollen lymph nodes. A very small percentage of infected persons develop West Nile neuroinvasive disease (i.e. meningitis or encephalitis). Symptoms of West Nile neuroinvasive disease may include severe headache, fever, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions and paralysis. People experiencing any of these symptoms should contact a healthcare provider. The Wyoming Public Health Laboratory offers free WNV testing for healthcare providers with suspected cases.

More information is available on the web at www.badskeeter.org or by calling the West Nile virus hotline at: 1-877-WYO-BITE.

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